



**TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
KIVA – CITY HALL
3939 N. DRINKWATER BOULEVARD
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA
AUGUST 23, 2005**

SUMMARIZED MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Mark Gilliland
Vice-Chairman Brian Davis
Commissioner Michael Bruz
Commissioner J. David Hill (arrived at 6:15 p.m.)
Commissioner William Howard
Commissioner Kelly McCall
Commissioner Matthew Taunton

STAFF PRESENT: Rose Arballo, Transportation Commission Coordinator
Tim Conner, Planning and Development Services
Teresa Huish, Planning and Development Services
Alex McLaren, Municipal Services
Dave Meinhart, Transportation Planning and Transit Director
Paul Porell, Traffic Engineering Director
Mary O'Connor, General Manager, Transportation Department

1 **CALL TO ORDER**

The regular meeting of the Scottsdale Transportation Commission was called to order by Chairman Gilliland at 6:00 p.m.

2 **WELCOME NEW COMMISSIONER WILLIAM HOWARD**

Chairman Gilliland welcomed Commissioner William Howard to the Transportation Commission. Commissioner Howard introduced himself to the Commissioners.

3 **ROLL CALL**

A formal roll call confirmed the members present as stated above.

4 **APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Commissioner McCall asked about the correct web site address for the IBR tunnel proposal. Ms. O'Connor clarified that <http://members.cox.net/ibr.tunnel> is the correct address.

COMMISSIONER MCCALL MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES WITH THE CORRECTION NOTED ABOVE, SECONDED BY COMMISSIONER TAUNTON. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY WITH A VOTE OF 6 (SIX) TO 0 (ZERO).

5 SCOTTSDALE SCENIC ROADWAYS

Ms. Huish, Strategic Planning Manager with Planning and Development Services, presented proposed amendments to the General Plan to include the scenic corridor guidelines adopted in 2003. Ms. Huish noted that her Department has asked Council for direction on creating guidelines for “buffered roadways” as well as any other scenic roadway designation that may come through. Additionally, the proposal includes the creation of a new designation, “desert scenic roadways.”

Ms. Huish's presentation included maps, which showed existing open spaces, existing scenic corridors and buffered roadways, themed streets, and the Environmentally Sensitive Lands Ordinance district, where the desert scenic roadway designation would be applied to the mile and half-mile streets.

Ms. Huish noted that public reaction to the designation of additional Scenic Corridors has been mixed. This is in part because the roads that were recommended for designation are already developed to a degree and people were concerned that the imposition of setbacks would cause hardship to homeowners who wanted to make alterations on their property. Applying a designation to streets that are already developed is a greater challenge.

Planning and Development Services recommended that the buffered roadway designation be applied to Bell Road and that Thompson Peak Parkway and Lone Mountain Road should be maintained as buffered roadways. They recommended adding a “desert scenic roadways” to the General Plan hierarchy, amending the General Plan text and taking care of some administrative items. Ms. Huish outlined the process staff had followed to consult with the public and City bodies.

Chairman Gilliland noted that this item was on the agenda for information and possible Commission action. A discussion ensued on the proposals and public reaction and concerns. The Chairman thanked Ms. Huish for her presentation and noted that no citizens had asked to address the Commission on this matter.

6 INDIAN BEND ROAD PROJECT

Mr. Meinhart reported on the project to improve Indian Bend Road between Scottsdale Road and Hayden Road. This project was included in the Bond 2000 election. Mr. Meinhart reviewed the City's goals to manage increased traffic volume, improve drainage and enhance safety for vehicular traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians, along with improvements to the landscaping and aesthetics.

Mr. Meinhart noted that in public consultation, neighborhood goals have been identified and include: making the wash more attractive; preserving and

protecting neighborhoods from the impacts of increased traffic volume; providing safe and convenient resident access to the road.

Mr. Meinhart's presentation showed staff recommendations for each of the three segments of the project.

Chairman Gilliland thanked Mr. Meinhart for his presentation. He read comment cards from three citizens who did not wish to speak. Joyce Suchocki, Barbara Nelson, and Carolanne Heneghan expressed opposition to construction of the tunnel, citing expense as a concern. It was noted that the addresses supplied by these citizens are on the north side of Indian Bend Road.

Chairman Gilliland asked speakers to limit their remarks to three minutes.

Jeffrey Mangers, Board of Directors for Camelview Greens, 6870 N. 77th Street, Scottsdale, AZ 85250

Mr. Mangers spoke in favor of the tunnel proposal. He opined that including the project in the Transportation Master Plan would ensure that the interests of different stakeholders were taken into consideration. Much of the traffic in the neighborhood is thru traffic. A balanced look at all of the questions needs to be taken. This is not merely a transportation question, because of the impact on neighborhoods.

Michael B. Merrill, 8713 E. Vernon Ave., Scottsdale, AZ

Stated he was opposed to the proposed tunnel. He questioned whether traffic volumes were as high as stated. He felt the expense of the tunnel was not justified. Issues of ventilation and emergency vehicle access also concerned him. He acknowledged that the bridge design should be carefully evaluated.

George Knowlton, 8701 E. Valley View Rd., Scottsdale, AZ 85250

Stated that no one had spoken in opposition to the tunnel project at the June 16th meeting because people were unaware it would be a topic of discussion. The expense of building and maintaining a tunnel under the wash would be borne by Scottsdale taxpayers as a whole and the benefits would be enjoyed by a very small number of residents.

Alita Arnold, 7812 E. Via de Belleza, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Addressed the Commission in favor of the bridge, praising its design. Thru traffic should be managed using other streets rather than having all of it routed along Indian Bend Road.

Diane Kay, 7924 E. Via de Belleza, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Ms. Kay who lives north of Indian Bend Road, said that road closings due to the wash flooding are not a huge issue. A bridge would have minimal impact. She suggested adding more culverts under the road, which would make a bridge unnecessary. The tunnel would impact property owners and access to 78th Street would be a problem. She asked the Commission to consider installing a traffic light at 78th Place so that the neighborhoods north of Indian Bend Road could have safer access to the road.

Harry Maseloff, 7847 E. Via de Belleza, Scottsdale, AZ 85258

Mr. Maseloff lives north of Indian Bend Road. He favors the installation of a traffic light at the intersection of Indian Bend Road and 78th Street that would operate in response to traffic conditions. He stated that the original plan was to mitigate flooding in Indian Bend wash, not to accommodate traffic volume. Road closures due to flood conditions rarely occur. Widening the road would be a challenge and impact property owners and the wildlife in the wash.

Anneliese Goodwin, 7779 E. Via de Belleza, Scottsdale, AZ

Long-term resident of the neighborhood north of Indian Bend Road, said that the truck traffic on Indian Bend Road has caused settling and structural damage to her home. She wanted to know the cost of building and maintaining a bridge, noting that the cost of the tunnel has been made public.

Commissioner Bruz asked what data was available on road closures due to flooding of the Indian Bend wash. Mr. Meinhart estimated a maximum of five to ten days per year, but noted that exact figures have not been tracked.

Commissioner Bruz asked whether any study had looked at what the impact on surrounding roads would be if Indian Bend Road were left as a two-lane road, given that the public comments were that much of the traffic was thru traffic.

Mr. Meinhart replied that traffic turning movements had been studied and noted that this kind of traffic modeling is very difficult to do. With regard to access for emergency vehicles during flooding events, Mr. McLaren added that he had met with the deputy fire and police chiefs, and that both departments are in favor of a structure that will enable emergency vehicles to move when the wash is flooded. The proposal is for a 100-year flood crossing, and he noted that the only other east-west 100-year crossings are at Thomas and McDowell.

Vice-Chairman Davis asked whether installing a traffic light at the intersection of 78th Street and Indian Bend Road was under consideration. Mr. Meinhart replied that the Department did not recommend a signal at this point in time. He said that widening the road would improve traffic flow and lessen congestion at that intersection. Staff will continue to monitor the intersection.

Vice-Chairman Davis asked how the percentage of truck traffic on Indian Bend Road compared with other streets. Mr. Porell said that Indian Bend Road is the only east-west truck route north of Camelback Road. Mr. Meinhart said that the traffic study for the preliminary design had shown that two percent of the traffic volume was truck traffic.

Commissioner Hill asked staff about the projected costs of a bridge, noting that Ms. Goodwin had told the Commission she had not been able to get the figures for the recently completed Scottsdale Road bridge at McCormick Parkway. Mr. McLaren replied that the Scottsdale Road crossing of Indian Bend Wash had been originally bid as a bridge structure. He had asked the contractor to isolate the costs for constructing the six arch structures and it was estimated at \$2.2 million. He added the caveat that this figure referred to the design with six

arches. Staff is now recommending eight arches for improved flow and extensive retaining walls, and these factors would impact the cost.

Chairman Gilliland asked what the current cost estimate for the eight-arch bridge was. Mr. Meinhart said the estimate was just under \$2 million, plus the cost of retaining walls and paving the roadway.

Chairman Gilliland asked about the cost of maintaining a bridge as compared to tunnel maintenance. Mr. Meinhart responded that an annual maintenance budget of somewhere between a quarter of a million dollars to over half a million had been suggested for a tunnel. Maintaining a bridge costs about the same as maintaining a roadway, typically \$10,000 to \$20,000 per mile, annually.

Commissioner Howard asked how much delay would be caused by waiting to see what the Transportation Master Plan would have to say about this matter. This was a suggestion from the public. If it was decided to wait for the Transportation Master Plan, he wondered what impact this delay would have on traffic volume in the meantime.

Ms. O'Connor replied that this would probably have the effect of delaying the Indian Bend Road project by two to three years. Mr. Meinhart said that traffic was growing at about three percent each year, which equates to an extra 2,000 vehicles per day.

Ms. O'Connor said that although some people suggested waiting, other citizens were commenting that this should have been done with the earlier bond issue. Both points of view had their merits, and it would be up to the Commission to make a decision.

In response to a question from Commissioner McCall about what happened to the funds from the earlier bond election, Ms. O'Connor reported that it was her understanding the bond referred to had been for under \$40 million and was likely insufficient to fund the original project. Research would be needed to give a complete answer. Mr. Meinhart added that the Bond Commission would be involved if the project were delayed for the Transportation Master Plan, and the funds may be directed to another project.

Commissioner McCall noted that a large commercial development is proposed for the southwest corner of Scottsdale Road and Indian Bend. Once developed, this would impact traffic volumes and patterns. She asked what the plans were for bicycle use. Mr. Meinhart said there would be on-street bike lanes and that public consultation recommended a multi-use path along the north side of Indian Bend Road to connect with the north-south path at Hayden Road, continue east to Scottsdale Road and tie into an existing underpass connecting the Seville shopping center to the Railroad Park. Based on a recently completed signal warrant study, staff also recommends that a traffic signal be installed serving the Seville and the Railroad Park.

Noting that there is often a parking problem at the Railroad Park, Commissioner McCall asked whether there would be extra parking spaces along the new

roadway. Mr. Meinhart said they were working with the Parks Department to develop a plan to re-stripe the parking lot to gain up to 50 extra spaces.

Commissioner McCall asked whether anything was being done to minimize light pollution from headlights in the bridge design. Mr. Meinhart replied that this issue is being looked at very closely. The bridge is intended to be as low as possible.

Commissioner McCall asked about the impact of the bridge on wildlife. Mr. Meinhart said they are providing a way for wildlife to traverse under the roadway. Currently wildlife has to cross the roadway.

Chairman Gilliland asked staff what shoulders the bridge structure could support. Public commentary in favor of the tunnel had noted that the tunnel design had shoulders. Mr. Porell replied that occupants of disabled vehicles could use the sidewalk to leave the bridge area, while the bike lane could be used to park a disabled vehicle.

Vice-Chairman Davis felt he could not justify the extra expense of building a tunnel. He felt that staff's recommendation addresses a number of issues positively, including dealing with the increasing traffic along Indian Bend Road and concerns about serious floods. He also felt it would positively impact the aesthetics in the area.

Commissioner McCall asked whether there would be a center turn lane in the roadway. Mr. Meinhart replied there would be either a raised median or a center turn lane, depending on location.

VICE-CHAIRMAN DAVIS MOVED THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE STAFF PROPOSAL OF ALTERNATES 1A, 2B, AND 3B. COMMISSIONER BRUZ SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH PASSED UNANIMOUSLY WITH A VOTE OF SEVEN (7) TO ZERO (0).

The Commissioners thanked the citizens who had expended a great deal of effort in coming up with a creative alternative to the bridge.

7 **NEIGHBORHOOD TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, POLICIES AND PROCEDURES UPDATE**

Ms. O'Connor reported that focus groups had been held on June 9, August 2 and August 9. Meeting notes were included in the Commissioners' packets. Once the final focus group with public involvement professionals has been held, the Department will incorporate the comments that address procedural concerns. At every focus group people had asked for a shorter time frame for the implementation process and for ample opportunities for two-way communication.

The Transportation Master Plan might examine whether some streets have characteristics that make them suitable candidates for traffic calming. Mr. Porell added that the newly formed Fire Department is currently working on identifying their major response routes for each fire station. These should be taken into consideration when determining whether a roadway was an appropriate candidate for traffic calming. Traffic calming could be done on a major response route, but with some limitations.

Ms. O'Connor said the Department was looking at interim options that could be provided for neighborhoods that were waiting for review. She outlined some alternatives used in other communities.

Commissioner Howard asked about the number of people who had been involved in the focus groups, expressing concern about drawing conclusions from a relatively small number of people who were all actively involved in the process. Ms. O'Connor replied that approximately 20 people had participated to date. Staff also met with transportation professionals who do traffic calming in other Valley cities. She clarified this was just one mechanism for getting input. The Department is planning to do a more extensive public input process through the Commission prior to adoption of policies/procedures. The focus groups were designed to get input from specific groups, not to gather statistical information.

Chairman Gilliland said he was concerned that the process was taking a long time. He asked what the schedule was for producing the written manual. This would provide a set procedure for dealing with each case that comes up. He encouraged staff to bring the Commission a proposal on how they were going to go about dealing with issues that are raised. A written approach was needed so that all parties could have a common understanding of the process.

Mr. Porell replied there were informal neighborhood traffic management guidelines that have been used very successfully on many projects. The update is a formalization of the informal guidelines and it is important to keep the successful elements. Ms. O'Connor said the Department hoped to have a presentation to the Commission in November. Chairman Gilliland acknowledged this is an enormous job, but people need to feel that they understand the rules and that the rules are being applied fairly.

Mr. Porell stated that the on-call consultant contract to assist the Department in neighborhood traffic management projects is scheduled to go to Council on August 29.

Commissioner Taunton reported that the subcommittee looking at the downtown trolley has met three times since the last regular Commission meeting. This group consists of downtown business owners, residents, activists, and City staff. The group identified key activity centers and how the trolley service will be structured in the future. Debra Astin, the City's Transit Manager, had designed preferred alternative routes. The subcommittee plans to meet again in September.

8 **ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR**

Chairman Gilliland read a comment by Ms. Susan Wood requesting that a discussion of the Cactus Road project be on the agenda of a future meeting. She expressed concerns about the safety of placing steel horse silhouettes in the center of the roundabouts. She asked that the surrounding neighborhoods be surveyed before undertaking construction on Cactus Road east of 96th Street.

In response to inquiry by Commissioner Howard, Ms. O'Connor acknowledged that Ms. Wood's petition for the halting of all roundabout construction in the City had been discussed in April by Council and the Commission. Council rejected that petition. Ms. O'Connor noted that there would be another opportunity for input on the design specifics, but that a neighborhood survey could possibly be redundant. A capital projects manager is obtaining public input and communicating to residents. The question of the steel horse silhouettes had been referred to the Design Review Board and other residents had raised aesthetic concerns.

Mr. Meinhart added that the Cactus project is in the final design stages and they are at the public information update stage. Chairman Gilliland commented that the safety concerns with regards to the horse silhouettes might have some validity and opined that safety considerations should outweigh aesthetics. He would be in favor of further discussion of this matter in the future. Mr. Porell noted that landscaping and art elements in the central island of a roundabout serve as visual cues to drivers that a roundabout is ahead.

Ms. O'Connor said staff would summarize the information regarding the public involvement process, the history of the Cactus project and the 96th Street project and the Council discussions regarding roundabouts and safety concerns. These topics would be on the agenda for the next meeting.

9 **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS**

Commissioner McCall noted she would like to see maintenance issues on an upcoming agenda. Ms. O'Connor suggested that someone from the Municipal Services Department could present an overview along with additional input from other departments.

10 **GENERAL MANAGER COMMENTS**

Ms. O'Connor announced that requests for qualifications are now out for the ASU-Scottsdale transit passenger facility and the Transportation Master Plan. Staff expects to go to Council with design team selection in late September or early October.

Several public meetings are scheduled for the fall on various roadway projects.

Commissioner McCall asked Ms. O'Connor if she had a response to the letter from Bob Bishop. Ms. O'Connor had not been copied on the letter but said it could be put on the agenda for a future study session so that the Commission might consider a response.

Commissioner Howard asked about the Transportation Master Plan. Given the importance of this to the future of Scottsdale, he felt there should be Commission involvement as the process moves forward. He expressed the need to have a full understanding of all aspects before the Transportation Master Plan was an agenda item.

Ms. O'Connor said that this could be a topic either for the a study session or a regular Commission meeting. It might be helpful to do this with the consulting firm that Council is to approve. Mr. Meinhart said that the approval of the Master Plan was a fluid process. He felt it would take a minimum of 18 months to complete the Transportation Master Plan. The Commission would receive regular updates and have opportunities to participate.

Ms. O'Connor briefly reviewed the Commission's past involvement in developing transportation plans, reporting that this is a unique effort and the first time that a plan is being developed to pull all of the pieces together and look at how the different elements relate to each other.

11 **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, the meeting adjourned at 8:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
A-V Tronics, Inc.

***NOTE: Video and/or audio recordings of Scottsdale Transportation Commission meetings are available from the Scottsdale Transportation Department for up to six months following the meeting date.**